

What is claimed is:

1. An absorbent body suitable for incorporation into disposable absorbent articles, the absorbent body comprising: a non-woven absorbent structure having a unitary construction and comprising absorbent fibers, the absorbent structure having a longitudinal length, a lateral width and a thickness, a portion of the absorbent structure having discontinuous absorbent zones that define at least two channels, at least one of the channels running in a longitudinal length direction and at least one of the channels running in a lateral width direction, and wherein the density of the absorbent structure in the channels is less than or equal to the density of a portion of the absorbent structure adjacent the channels.
2. The absorbent body of claim 1, wherein that portion of the absorbent structure having the discontinuous absorbent zones has a cylindrical compression at yield which is at least 55 percent less than the cylindrical compression at yield of an otherwise similar absorbent structure free of the discontinuous absorbent zones.
3. The absorbent body of claim 2, wherein the channels extend through no less than 10 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure; and wherein the channels extend through no more than 90 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure.
4. The absorbent body of claim 3, wherein the at least one channel running in a longitudinal length direction extends no less than 20 percent of the longitudinal length of the absorbent structure.
5. The absorbent body of claim 3, wherein the at least one channel running in a lateral width direction extends no less than 20 percent of the lateral width of the absorbent structure.
6. The absorbent body of claim 1, wherein the absorbent structure further comprises binder material activated to form inter-fiber bonds within the absorbent structure.
7. The absorbent body of claim 6, wherein that portion of the absorbent structure having the discontinuous absorbent zones has a cylindrical compression load at yield which is at least 30 percent less than the cylindrical compression load at yield of an otherwise similar absorbent structure free of the discontinuous absorbent zones.

8. The absorbent body of claim 7, wherein the channels extend through no less than 10 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure; and wherein the discrete channels extend through no more than 90 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure.

9. The absorbent body of claim 8, wherein the at least one channel running in a longitudinal length direction extends no less than 20 percent of the longitudinal length of the absorbent structure.

10. The absorbent body of claim 8, wherein the at least one channel running in a lateral width direction extends no less than 20 percent of the lateral width of the absorbent structure.

11. An absorbent article comprising a fluid pervious liner, a liquid impervious outer cover and an absorbent body disposed between the liner and the outer cover, the absorbent body comprising: a non-woven absorbent structure having a unitary construction and comprising absorbent fibers, the absorbent structure having a longitudinal length, a lateral width and a thickness, and wherein a portion of the absorbent structure has discontinuous absorbent zones that define at least two discrete channels and wherein the density of the absorbent structure in the discrete channels is less than or equal to the density of a portion of the absorbent structure adjacent the discrete channels.

12. The absorbent body of claim 11, wherein that portion of the absorbent structure having the discontinuous absorbent zones has a cylindrical compression at yield which is at least 55 percent less than the cylindrical compression at yield of an otherwise similar absorbent structure free of the discontinuous absorbent zones.

13. The absorbent body of claim 12, wherein the channels extend through no less than 10 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure; and wherein the channels extend through no more than 90 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure.

14. The absorbent body of claim 13, wherein the at least one channel running in a longitudinal length direction extends no less than 20 percent of the longitudinal length of the absorbent structure.

15. The absorbent body of claim 13, wherein the at least one channel running in a lateral width direction extends no less than 20 percent of the lateral width of the absorbent structure.

16. The absorbent body of claim 11, wherein the absorbent structure further comprises binder material activated to form inter-fiber bonds within the absorbent structure.

17. The absorbent body of claim 16, wherein that portion of the absorbent structure having the discontinuous absorbent zones has a cylindrical compression load at yield which is at least 30 percent less than the cylindrical compression load at yield of an otherwise similar absorbent structure free of the discontinuous absorbent zones.

18. The absorbent body of claim 17, wherein the channels extend through no less than 10 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure; and wherein the discrete channels extend through no more than 90 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure.

19. The absorbent body of claim 18, wherein the at least one channel running in a longitudinal length direction extends no less than 20 percent of the longitudinal length of the absorbent structure.

20. The absorbent body of claim 18, wherein the at least one channel running in a lateral width direction extends no less than 20 percent of the lateral width of the absorbent structure.

21. An absorbent body suitable for incorporation into disposable absorbent articles, the absorbent body comprising: a non-woven absorbent structure having a unitary construction and comprising absorbent fibers, the absorbent structure having a longitudinal length, a lateral width and a thickness, a portion of the absorbent structure having discontinuous absorbent zones that define at least four channels, at least two of the channels being spaced from one another and running in a longitudinal length direction, at least two of the channels being spaced from one another and running in a lateral width direction, the portion of the absorbent structure having the discontinuous absorbent zones having a cylindrical compression load at yield which is at least 55 percent less than the cylindrical compression load at yield of an otherwise similar absorbent structure free of the discontinuous absorbent zones, and wherein the density of the absorbent structure in the channels is less than or equal to the density of a portion of the absorbent structure adjacent the channels.

22. The absorbent body of claim 21, wherein the channels extend through no less than 10 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure; and wherein the channels extend through no more than no more than 90 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure.

23. The absorbent body of claim 22, wherein the channels running in a longitudinal length direction extend no less than 20 percent of the longitudinal length of the absorbent structure.

24. The absorbent body of claim 22, wherein the channels running in a lateral width direction extend no less than 20 percent of the lateral width of the absorbent structure.

25. The absorbent body of claim 21, wherein the absorbent structure further comprises binder material activated to form inter-fiber bonds within the absorbent structure.

26. The absorbent body of claim 25, wherein that portion of the absorbent structure having the discontinuous absorbent zones has a cylindrical compression load at yield which is at least 30 percent less than the cylindrical compression load at yield of an otherwise similar absorbent structure free of the discontinuous absorbent zones.

27. The absorbent body of claim 26, wherein the channels extend through no less than 10 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure; and wherein the channels extend through no more than 90 percent of the thickness of the absorbent structure.

28. The absorbent body of claim 27, wherein the channels running in a longitudinal length direction extend no less than 20 percent of the longitudinal length of the absorbent structure.

29. The absorbent body of claim 27, wherein the channels running in a lateral width direction extend no less than 20 percent of the lateral width of the absorbent structure.